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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

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(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Holiday Cookies." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, USDA.

---ooOoo---

I can't remember when you and I had a talk about cookies. Not for a long time, I'm sure. But here's Thanksgiving day close at hand, bringing all sorts of preparations with it. Here's the hospitality season of the year approaching. And isn't a big jar filled with homemade cookies one of our traditional symbols of old-time hospitality?

Our grandmothers prided themselves on keeping their cookie jars always full. Of course, they couldn't step around to the corner store and purchase cookies or wafers or sweet cakes ready-made, as we can today. But commercial cookies, useful as they are, still don't quite fill the place of the good cookies turned out in home kitchens. We housewives still can make certain good things that we can't find in the market. More than that, home baking is often a considerable saving. Another advantage of making our own cookies is that we can be sure of the ingredients we put in.

The favorite kind of cookie of our grandmother's day was the rolled-and-cut cookie. Old-fashioned ginger snaps and molasses cookies, those delicious chocolate cookies, as well as sugar cookies -- all these were made by the roll and cut method. The conscientious, old-fashioned housewife was usually no artist in cooking short-cuts. She followed the time-honored recipes dutifully, even when they took the longest way 'round. So it was about her cookies. Baking a batch of these rolled-out and cut-out cookies took hours, even for a fast worker.

But the busy housewife today has discovered a shorter way to make up the same ingredients. She uses the so-called "ice-box method."

The old method takes four steps. You mix the dough; then you roll it out on the board, where you may run into the danger of using too much flour and making the cookies too stiff; then you cut out each cookie; then you place it in the pan and bake. The new method is much easier and quicker. You form the dough into a loaf for slicing. Then you set it in the ice-box or some other cold place to chill. As the fat in the mixture chills the dough becomes very firm. Then instead of rolling and cutting, you just slice the loaf very thin. Each slice makes a cookie. Use a thin-bladed, sharp slicing knife and cut the loaf in very thin slices. Bake in a hot oven. The cookies will come out either round or square or oblong according to the way you shape the loaf. Oh yes, and if you prefer, you can buy molds for shaping the dough. Molded dough gives a more perfect shape to your cookies. Both rolled and ice-box cookies you bake in a hot oven. Keep them crisp in tin boxes with close fitting lids. Rich chocolate cookies, pinwheel cookies, crisp nut cookies and sand tarts are still other varieties that you can cook by the ice-box method.

But another kind of cookie that is even easier and quicker to make and one that goes a long way on a little is the drop cookie. For this type, you stir up a softer mixture to give a dough that will drop in mounds on the baking pan. The drop mixture is always thin enough to drop off your spoon. For drop cookies, the oven temperature is most important for success. Start the baking with a hot oven to prevent dough from spreading too much. Then reduce the temperature to finish. Orange drop cookies are delicious little holiday cakes that you can get ready in the minimum of time. Chocolate drop cookies are another kind. Or you can make rocks, sometimes called nut hermits.

Finally let's mention one more sweet-cake possibility. These are the mixtures that are baked in a sheet of soft dough, and cut after baking. Date bars belong to this class. So do brownies. For the bars you need a moderate oven (about 300 degrees F.). Baking will take about 30 to 40 minutes. Brownies take about an hour to bake at a low temperature.

Now a word or two about cookie ingredients. Any mild-flavored shortening is good for cookies. Sweetening? Well, some recipes call for white sugar and some for brown, some call for sugar and molasses, sugar and sirup, or sugar and honey. The liquid in the mixture may be milk -- sweet, sour, or buttermilk -- water, fruit juice, or coffee. The flour may be hard wheat, soft wheat, or whole wheat, or even rolled oats or prepared cereal flakes. There. You see what possibilities you have in the line of ingredients. If you have a good file of cookie recipes, you can almost always find some variety of cookie to suit the ingredients you have on hand.

Suppose now that callers drop in at your house Thanksgiving afternoon or evening. They won't want any rich or hearty food. But something tart or spicy may appeal to their appetites. Let's see how that cookie jar of yours might rise to the occasion. How about serving a steaming pitcher of hot spiced grape juice, along with a plate of assorted cookies of your own make -- crisp vanilla ice-box wafers and date bars, and best-ers. Easy refreshments to serve on a moment's notice. Variety in the shape, color, and flavor of the cookies makes the plate attractive.

Now the recipe for those easy inexpensive cookies called best-ers: 11 ingredients.

1/2 cup butter	1 teaspoon baking powder
1 cup sugar	1 cup chopped raisins
2 eggs	1 cup dry shredded coconut
2 tablespoons milk	2 teaspoons vanilla, and
2 cups sifted flour	3 cups flaked, toasted breakfast
1 teaspoon salt	food.

I'll repeat those. (REPEAT)

Cream the fat and sugar, and add the beaten egg yolks and the milk. Sift the dry ingredients and add with the raisins and coconut to the first mixture. Fold in the beaten egg whites and add the vanilla and the breakfast food. Stir carefully so the flakes are not broken. This is a very stiff mixture. Place by spoonfuls an inch apart on a greased baking sheet, bake in a very slow oven (250 degrees F.) until brown, and watch closely, for these cakes burn easily. Remove from the pan while hot.

Monday, we'll make plans for our Thanksgiving dinner.

